



# Neighborhood Guide

*Resources to engage & organize your neighborhood*



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# Neighborhood Guide

## *Resources to engage & organize your neighborhood*

Increased neighborhood participation benefits the whole community by creating a positive environment of shared responsibility and collaboration. Each neighborhood is as unique as the people and businesses that inhabit them. Organizing a neighborhood association is an excellent way to build relationships between neighbors, encourage community engagement, and develop a sense of neighborhood pride. Neighborhoods where people know each other and look out for each other are also safer, healthier places to live. Neighbors who work together can play an active role in shaping the places they care about most and improve the quality of life for themselves and others.



Although neighborhoods are different, the motivations for organizing are often the same – interests, safety, participation, and bringing people together to shape change. This guide offers tools to address these components and assist you in organizing a neighborhood association.



## Chapter 1: Organizing a Neighborhood Association

A neighborhood association is a geographically based organization of people who organize around common interests of the members. It provides a means for neighbors to decide what needs to be done and work together to make it happen. Together, neighbors can plan projects and activities beneficial to their area, create a forum for discussion of local issues, and establish means to participate in community decision-making.

### Why do neighborhoods organize?

Neighborhoods organized for a wide range of reasons. The three most common reasons include:

Stay Informed	Communicate & Participate	Build Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Notification regarding developments within or near neighborhood boundaries.</li><li>• Weekly neighborhood news updates</li><li>• Neighborhood page on the City website</li><li>• Free meeting space</li><li>• Meeting supplies</li><li>• Translation services if request</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promote two-way communication with each other, City Council, and City staff</li><li>• Discuss issues and participate in decision-making with a unified voice</li><li>• Increase awareness of decisions impacting the neighborhood</li><li>• Receive a discounted rate on land use appeals and interpretations</li><li>• Join in the annual Neighborhood Summit</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Connect socially through block parties and neighborhood events</li><li>• Promote neighborhood pride</li><li>• Increase safety</li><li>• Address emergency preparedness <i>together</i></li><li>• Neighborhood projects and events</li></ul>

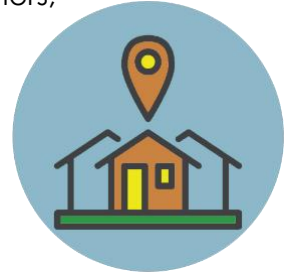
### City Recognition Requirements

Neighborhood associations are autonomous organizations and are not considered agencies of the City. Neighborhood associations that meet basic City criteria, however, may be provided limited forms of financial and staff assistance.

The City of Corvallis recognizes neighborhood associations that meet the following criteria:

Allow all community members, including renters and property owners, within a defined geographic boundary to participate

- Maintain contact information for two neighborhood representatives with the City
- Establish inclusive geographic boundaries
- Conduct a minimum of one meeting per year
- File an organizing document with the City, such as bylaws or neighborhood agreement, which includes an association name, purpose, officer or representative positions, a method of communication, membership, and boundaries (including a map)



This document contains guidance regarding these criteria as well as resources and templates for emerging and existing neighborhood associations.

## Chapter 2: Organizing a Core Group

Neighborhood organizing often starts with a small core group of neighbors with a common desire to invest in their neighborhood. There might be a shared concern that has sparked the need to organize, such as improving neighborhood safety or ensuring a voice in decisions affecting the neighborhood. An association that begins informally with just a few people may gradually evolve into an organized group with common interests.

### Convene a Core Group

No matter how dedicated an individual is, organizing a neighborhood association will require a team. To get started, convene a core group of committed neighbors to form the association. The number of people needed will depend on the size of the area you want to organize (see “Boundaries”). Neighbors who have an interest and are excited about the process make up the core group.

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*Consider meeting with a representative from an existing recognized neighborhood association to gain insights and lessons learned.*

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When you have a commitment from five to ten people, set up a meeting at a comfortable place and discuss your goals and plan of action. Provide time for all participants to share some of the reasons why they are interested in a neighborhood association. Together, decide on interests and issues that are most pressing, most extensive, and the most easily achieved. Discuss the need for a structured association to deal with short-term concerns and long-term goals. Also, talk about how to get other people involved. Set a date to meet and plan your next steps for organizing the association.

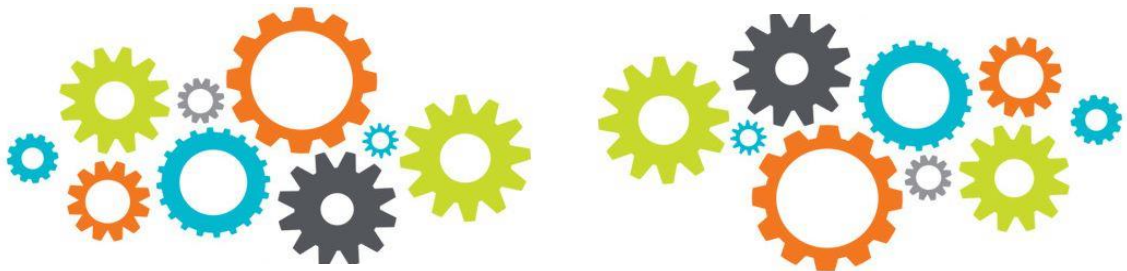
### Core group meetings

- Define the purpose of the meeting.
- Develop an agenda in cooperation with key participants.
- Choose a location suitable to your group's size. If possible, arrange the room so members face each other, for example, a circle or semi-circle.
- Identify a meeting time that accommodates all members of the core group.
- Distribute the agenda and circulate background material, lengthy documents, or articles prior to the meeting.
- Use visual aids for interest (posters, diagrams, etc.). It may be handy to have a map of your neighborhood area as a reference.
- When you conclude, always make sure everyone knows where and when the next meeting will be held.

### During the meeting

- Welcome members and thank them for coming. Remember, they are also volunteers sharing their time and effort to invest in their neighborhood as well. Consider light refreshments to create an atmosphere of hospitality.
- Use nametags to help people learn each other's names.

- Use a sign-in sheet to create an e-mail distribution list following the meeting.
- Keep minutes of the meeting. These are especially important for members who were unable to attend and as an important reference to track input and decisions made by the group. See *Minutes Template*.
- Start on time. End on time.
- At the planning meeting, discuss the group's ideas for starting a neighborhood association.
- Be prepared to listen well. The best group discussions recognize all points of view and ideas.
- Encourage feedback. Ideas, activities and commitment to the organization improve when the decisions made reflect the contributions of the entire group.
- Keep conversation focused on the topic. Feel free to ask for only constructive and non-repetitive comments. Tactfully end discussions when they lose focus or become unproductive.
- The leader of this group should be a good facilitator. The leader should not feel the need to have all the answers or take on all the responsibilities for the group. Allow for the members of the group to share responsibilities, roles, and critical input as desired.
- Summarize agreements reached and actions items identified.
- Delegate responsibilities to as many core group members as possible – as many hands make light work – and sharing the work will make it more sustainable over time.
- Decide on the meeting location, date, and time of the next core group meeting.
- Thank everyone for coming. Remember, you are in this together!



### After the Meeting

- The note taker should write up and distribute meeting minutes within a few days. Be sure to highlight action items and assignments.
- Keep lines of communication open among the core group and effectively communicate the plans, goals, and activities to the neighborhood via newsletter, flyers, e-mail, or a phone tree.
- Evaluate how to improve the meetings. Did the meeting space work well? Did everyone feel welcome? Was it productive? Was everyone able to contribute? Is there a clear strategy on next steps? Was it fun?

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*Consider using Survey Monkey to collect feedback and obtain ideas for future meetings from attendees.*

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- Check in with members who have taken on a new responsibility. Do they need help? What resources might help them to succeed? Let them know they are not alone in the work.
- Put any unfinished business on the agenda for the next meeting.
- Identify ways to celebrate the progress being made. It is good to be in a community with other people who share common goals to invest in their neighborhood and make it a better place to live.



## Chapter 3: Planning a Neighborhood Meeting

A neighborhood meeting will bring many people into a room who are ready to participate. Planning is the best way to ensure their time and energy is well spent. Use the outline in this chapter to plan for the first neighborhood general meeting. Work with the core group to identify and assign tasks. Review the tasks, confirm responsible party, and set deadlines.

### Determine what to discuss at the large group general meeting



**A well-run meeting is the beginning of a successful neighborhood association.**

- Plan a strategy for getting people to come to the first meeting.
- Plan how to present the issues as the core group sees them.
- Prepare to explain the need to organize a neighborhood association.
- Ask for input from others on what a neighborhood association might accomplish.

At the planning meeting, discuss the group's ideas for starting a neighborhood association. Allow time for all the neighbors at this meeting to share their thoughts. Also at this planning meeting, discuss how the group might present their ideas to the larger group at the first general meeting. How can you entice the neighbors to attend the general meeting, provide input, and share ideas? A few common questions to consider are:

- Why do you want or need to organize a neighborhood association?
- What are the positive things to maintain and common problems to resolve in our neighborhood that a neighborhood association may help solve?
- How can we affect the health or livability of our neighborhood?
- What other things do you want the neighborhood association to accomplish?

### Draft a plan for what is to occur at the general meeting

To be successful, it is important for the first general meeting run as smoothly as possible. To ensure its success, discuss the following:

- What roles should the core group take during the larger first meeting?
- Encourage active participation from all newcomers. Do not present just your ideas as the final decision for the group at large. Seek input on the ideas as they are presented to the group. This will help the group feel like they "own" the idea or strategy as well.
- Allow people at the meeting to feel their ideas and input are welcome. A sense of belonging is crucial in getting the attendees to return and become even more active in the group.

## Agenda Items

Individually brainstorm some of the reasons that may draw neighbors to form a neighborhood association. Think big and broadly. As a core group, share your ideas, document them, and identify the top two-three topics that are likely to resonant with the majority of the audience. These will serve as the agenda items for the first neighborhood general meeting.

### Brainstorm Suggestions

- What current topics (e.g., a proposed development or a school bond levy) may interest neighbors?
- What neighborhood amenities do neighbors care for (e.g., parks, pool)?
- What challenges does the neighborhood have in common?
- What events might interest the neighbors?



After the agenda items are identified, work together to refine and prepare together. For example:

- Determine how the meeting will begin. Consider drafting a purpose statement and providing time for attendees to introduce themselves.
- Review each agenda item and identify the talking and discussion points for each item. Discuss how audience participation could be encouraged. For example, what questions will allow audience members to share their opinions or ideas?

### Effective Questions

- Open-ended (not answered with “yes” or “no”)
  - Inquisitive – leads people to think (“what,” “how,” “who” but not “why”)
  - You-oriented (“What do you think?” “How do you feel about it?”)
  - Appreciative (trust that the person has the answer)
- Identify what roles need to be filled and assign a core group member to each role.
  - Set aside ample time for socializing. Consider using ice breaker exercises, ask attendees to note where they live on a large map, place large pieces of paper around the room and ask attendees to share things like “The best part of our neighborhood is...,” “I describe my neighborhood as...”
  - Agree on how to end the meeting with momentum.

## Meeting Spaces

Try to estimate the number of people you expect at the first general meeting and then look for a meeting space to fit that number. It is important to keep the meeting place as neutral as possible for all of the attendees expected. Possible sites may include:

- Schools, both public and private
- Faith Institutions
- Private homes
- Community centers
- Non-profit organization centers
- For-profit business conference rooms
- Libraries

When looking for meeting space, consider proximity to the neighborhood, ability to accommodate those with disabilities, and size of the room. If the neighborhood is racially or ethnically diverse, consider translators.

Meeting space often comes with a nominal cost. Explain the meeting purpose, ask if the location is willing to support the effort by waiving or reducing the fee. Ask the core group if they have ideas for meeting spaces.

↳ Recognized neighborhood associations received free meeting space once a year at select city facilities and public schools.

## Publicize your meeting

Now you are ready to tell your neighbors about the general meeting. Begin with the basics: who, what, when, where, and why. If possible, include a phone number or e-mail address for those with questions about the meeting or who cannot attend but want to remain informed.

Common outreach methods include:

- Signboards on key streets are a good way to point people to your meeting.
- Post flyers on bulletin boards or windows in nearby businesses and coffee shops.
- Distribute flyers through neighborhood schools or PTAs.
- Flyer drop on doorsteps, or neighbor-to-neighbor doorbelling.
- Postcard mailer (mailing address lists are available through the City)
- News Release to the local newspaper announcing the meeting.
- Submit the event to be included on the City website
- Social Media Tools, such as Facebook and NextDoor, etc.



## Staging the Neighborhood Meeting

The first meeting will be one of the most important meetings for the new group. This may be the first general meeting of neighbors. The original planning meetings were only stepping-stones. Now is the time for your dreams and hard work to become reality. Ensure the following is available:

- Sign in sheet to collect the names and addresses of those in attendance
- Copies of the agenda
- Handouts
- Area map
- Contact information for core group

↳ Templates for neighborhood flyers, agendas, sign-in sheets, etc., and assistance with printing is available for your first meeting if request. Contact the Housing and Neighborhood Services Division for information.




## Chapter 4: Boundaries

While the core group establishes the preliminary boundaries to distribute meeting notices, the first meeting itself is an opportunity to refine boundaries as a neighborhood association.

### Mapping Activity

During the first meeting, consider using a large map for attendees to indicate where they live with a sticker. Ask attendees to draw a boundary around the area they consider their neighborhood. This activity will provide attendees with insights into (1) what areas are under-represented at the meeting, (2) the natural boundaries attendees identify with, and (3) whether more than one neighborhood may need to be formed.

 Contact the Housing and Neighborhood Services Division to request a map of the general area around the neighborhood.

### Review Criteria for Neighborhood Boundaries

The City reviews boundaries based on the following:

- ✓ Strong barriers such as major roads, rivers, railroad tracks, open spaces, or a major change in land use (e.g., transition from residential to industrial) bind the neighborhood.
- ✓ Major roadways and intersections do not bisect the neighborhood boundaries.
- ✓ The number of households within the boundaries is not less than 75 or greater than 500.
- ✓ Boundaries do not cross over other recognized neighborhood association boundaries.
- ✓ The boundaries include adjacent households that cannot otherwise meet neighborhood association criteria. The boundaries do not create an “island” of unrepresented households.



If the above criteria is not clearly met, the Housing and Neighborhood Services Division refers the decision to the Community Involvement and Diversity Advisory Board (CIDAB) for acceptance or revision guidance.

### The Common Pitfall

When developing boundaries, it is important to define an area where there are common interests and goals and where neighbors feel they have a *long-lasting* identity with each other.

Neighborhood associations are strongly discouraged from establishing boundaries based on a single issue. For example, creating a neighborhood association comprised of neighbors on each side of a major road widening project results in an

association that shares a single short-term interest but few long-lasting common interests.

## Neighborhood Association v. Home Owners Association

Because of their similarity in names, some confuse a neighborhood association and a homeowner's association. However, the two entities are quite different.

A **neighborhood association** is a section of a city with a common identity. Neighborhood associations offer a place to meet neighbors, exchange information, create projects and priorities, propose solutions, and have fun *together*. They are voluntary, inclusive of all who reside in the area, and members can join or leave at any time. A neighborhood association can include HOAs within its boundaries. Newly forming neighborhood associations are encouraged to reach out to homeowner's associations inside their proposed boundaries and notify them of their efforts.

A **homeowner's association (HOA)** is formed by a developer and pertains to a specific subdivision or project. The association provides the framework for the future maintenance of the development's common grounds and amenities, for instance a pool, clubhouse, or common area landscaping. All homeowners are compelled to follow the codes, covenants, and restrictions (CC&Rs) governing the development and pay association dues. An HOA does not have the ability to expand to include a neighborhood association within its boundaries.

TOPIC	NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION	HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION
Membership Requirements	Voluntary Membership	Mandatory Membership
Size	Membership fluctuates, as members are free to leave or join	Membership remains constant
Boundaries	Defined based on natural and built barriers and area density	Defined based on a specific subdivision's boundaries
Required to include renters	Yes	No
Required dues	No	Yes
Right to Rule	None	Deed restricted

An HOA may request recognition as an independent neighborhood association if the City's recognition requirements can be met, including (1) allow all community members, including renters and property owners to fully participate including in voting, in elections, and as representatives; (2) maintain contact information for two neighborhood representatives with the City; (3) meet the boundary criteria outlined above; (4) conduct a minimum of one meeting per year, and; (5) file an organizing document with the City, such as bylaws or a neighborhood agreement which includes an association name, purpose, officer or representative positions, a method of communication, membership, and boundaries.

## Chapter 5: Structure and Representatives

During the first general meeting, the neighbors should make key decisions regarding how the association is organized. This includes agreeing on an organizational structure, selecting representatives, and documenting these decisions in the form of a guiding document.

### Structure and Guiding Document

The City of Corvallis requires each neighborhood association to file a guiding document describing the purpose, structure, boundaries, meeting schedule, term length, as well as the amendment and voting processes. Guiding documents commonly used are described below and templates are available on the city website.

**Bylaws** represent an organizational structure that includes traditional roles such as President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Some neighborhood associations also include a board of directors with representatives from each street or area within the neighborhood. Bylaws are more formal and generally allow an elected representative to *speak on behalf of the neighborhood association*.

A **Neighborhood Agreement** offers a template for a simplified neighborhood association structure. The agreement requires two Neighborhood Representatives be identified to act as a conduit to share information between the neighbors, City Council, City staff, and the broader community. The Neighborhood Agreement is less formal and generally selected to establish a means to communicate between neighbors so they *speak on their own behalf* regarding decisions that affect them.



### Representatives

The structure adopted by the neighborhood association determines the roles and responsibilities of the representatives.

Neighborhood associations are encouraged to write a "position description" for each role identified in their structure or to clearly define the position in the guiding document. The description is useful in establishing expectations and boundaries. The description is also useful as a recruitment tool because it allows potential candidates to understand the scope of the commitment.

📌 The appendix includes samples of the following: bylaws, neighborhood agreement, and select "position descriptions" for use and modification.



## Chapter 6: Recruiting and Maintaining Members

Recruiting new members to the group can be a challenge, but it is only half the battle. The other half is keeping them involved in the organization. Every neighborhood association faces this challenge – here are a few ideas to address the topic.

### Recruiting and Engaging Members

Help new members find a place in the association. Not every-one is a self-starter. Many will offer to help but have no idea where to begin. Develop a list of volunteer activities that includes a job description and approximate time commitment for each task. This will be a great start for your new members.

- **Designate an official "greeter" at every meeting.** Always welcome new people and attempt to make them feel at ease. Watch for new faces at each meeting and welcome them enthusiastically. Introduce new members to someone who lives near them or shares a similar interest.
- **Avoid the appearance of cliques.** New members will feel excluded and may not return if the same people appear to run every project. Ask people directly if they are willing to join an effort. Use everyone's talents. Sensitivity to this issue is central to creating a sense of belonging among group members.
- **Encourage new ideas and input from everyone.** This is often most difficult for people who long have been involved in the neighborhood association and are more knowledgeable on the area than newcomers. People coming into a situation for the first time, however, are able to see things in a new light and can offer new solutions to old problems. New perspectives can assist the whole group in problem solving.
- **Respect time and commitment at every meeting.** Busy people will not attend meetings or involve themselves in organizations they consider a waste of time. Create agendas, start and end on time, document action items, and ask for people to report out on their tasks.
- **Maintain current membership records.** Keep a file that lists members' names, addresses, phone numbers, family member names, special talents, concerns, areas of interest, etc. Notify members when a need arises that connects to one of their talents, concerns, or interests.
- **Delegate and encourage subcommittees.** Neighborhood leaders often find themselves stretched. Forming subcommittees allows the neighborhood leader to step back from some responsibilities while also encouraging others to take on responsibilities for the group.



- **Have fun.** The work of the neighborhood association cannot be boring drudgery. Sponsor parties and celebrations to help neighbors know one another. Include kids, get outside, and eat some food *together*.

## Maintain Interest

- **Set a few well-defined, attainable goals or projects.** Document commitments, establish a timeline, partner people whenever possible.
- **Celebrate successes** and look for ways to acknowledge the achievements of volunteers.
- **Incorporate "fun"** into meetings and projects.
- **Ask for help.** Sometimes all it takes is asking a neighbor to do something. They may be willing if asked, but may not volunteer or speak up when an "all call" for help is issued.
- **Find out what is important to members** and encourage their involvement in committees and projects involving their interest.
- **Set aside time at each meeting for neighbors to share their concerns and interests.** Make it fun with sticker activities and consider breakout discussions to allow neighbors who wish to talk about a specific topic to do so.
- **Create a buddy system or "neighbor mentor"** to make newcomers feel more welcome and important to the association.
- **Publicize the neighborhood meetings well in advance;** including what will be on the agenda.
- **Keep meetings on track and to the point.** Summarize the results of decisions and actions at the end of the meeting so members leave with a sense of accomplishment.
- **Organize a social function** by delegating the event to a special committee.
- **Involve the youth** in the neighborhood in activities and events. Many times, kids are able to get their parents involved more easily than the association.
- **Provide useful and meaningful information** at the meeting. Contact the Housing and Neighborhoods Coordinator for information on City services and speakers.
- **Be thankful.** Always show appreciation to committee chairs and members. Volunteers always appreciate incentives and rewards. Some examples are recognizing and thanking a specific person or persons at a general meeting, acknowledging someone's efforts in your newsletter, or neighbors cooking dinner or cake/cookies for someone. Incentives and rewards do not have to cost a lot. Use your imagination and creativity.



## Chapter 7: Remember to have *FUN*

Nothing brings neighbors together quicker than a common interest and a will to solve a problem, meet a need and have some fun. The City encourages neighbors to undertake projects *together* and offers several programs and resources to make involvement fun. Here are a few ideas:



**Empowerment Grant Program** – The City sets aside funds each year to help neighborhoods and organizations work together to accomplish common goals that support the overall health, vitality and inclusivity of the place they call “home”. Funds have been used for neighborhood kiosks, newsletters, walking tour materials, block parties, and trimming parties. Apply for empowerment funds to make your neighborhood’s idea come to fruition.

**Painted Intersections** – A painted intersection bring vibrancy and social connections to a neighborhood. It creates a focal point that can tell a story about the area and gives neighbors a chance to work together. Visit [www.corvallisoregon.gov](http://www.corvallisoregon.gov) to find the [Painted Intersection Guide](#).

**Neighborhood Block Party** – A neighborhood block party is an event organized by residents of a neighborhood to promote involvement, relationship building, and community safety. Many neighborhoods make this an annual event to get together, refresh contact lists, meet new neighbors, and reconnect with others. Visit the city website for a [Neighborhood Block Party Guide](#).

**Neighborhood Tree Steward Program** - Neighbors with a love and fascination for trees and a devotion to making positive changes in our community, are encouraged to become a Neighborhood Tree Steward through Corvallis Parks and Recreation Urban Forestry!



**Emergency Preparedness for Neighborhoods Workshops** – During times of an emergency or disaster, neighbors are often the first available and most critical resource for one another. The [Emergency Preparedness for Neighborhoods Workshop](#) focuses on what neighbors can do *together* to protect themselves and their neighborhood in a disaster. The workshop provides an overview of preparedness programs offered through the City and the County, offers an opportunity to gain insights from neighborhoods already working on preparedness, and allocates time to develop simple next steps to begin work in your neighborhood.

## Appendix A: Sample Bylaws

### ARTICLE I. NAME OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

The name of this organization shall be the **INSERT** Neighborhood Association.

### ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

Section 1. The **Insert** Neighborhood Association is founded for the following purposes:

1. To facilitate and encourage communication among the members of the Association.
2. To provide an organizational structure for undertaking tasks that are of common concern to the members of the Association and related to enhancing the welfare and livability of the neighborhood.
3. To inform the members of the Association regarding issues of concern to the neighborhood and the larger community.
4. To promote and encourage the participation of members of the Association in local government and community issues.

Section 2. The **Insert** Neighborhood Association shall function as a nonpartisan organization. While encouraging its members to participate as individuals in all aspects of local political processes, the Association as an organization shall not endorse candidates for political office or take partisan stands on ballot issues.

### ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP AND GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES.

Section 1. Membership is open to any resident, property owner, or business owner (18 years of age or older) within the geographic boundaries described in Article III Section 2. Each member shall be entitled to one vote. Each corporation, partnership, non-profit agency, or business shall be limited to one vote. Membership shall terminate at once for anyone who moves from the neighborhood.

Section 2. The geographic boundaries of the Association are defined by and include **Insert** to the west, **Insert** to the north, **Insert** to the east, and **Insert** to the south. The boundary line defining the area known as **Insert** Neighborhood Association may be modified at a general meeting of the membership by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of a quorum (as defined in Article VI, Section 3).

### ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE BOARD.

Section 1. The officers shall consist of **[e.g., President/Chairperson, Vice President/Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer]**.

Section 2. Duties of **President/Chairperson**. The President shall coordinate and supervise the activities of the executive board and the organization. S/he shall preside at all meetings of the executive board and general membership and act as the primary contact person for and liaison with the City of Corvallis and make appointments to the Executive Board within the restrictions imposed by Article V, Section 2.

Section 3. Duties of **Vice President/Vice Chairperson**. The Vice President shall assist the President with his/her duties as requested. In the absence of the President, the Vice President shall execute the duties of the President.

Section 4. Duties of the **Secretary**. The Secretary shall record and maintain on file minutes, correspondence, membership lists, attendance lists, and other records.

Section 5. Duties of **Treasurer**. The Treasurer shall keep the financial records of the Association and have authority to sign checks for expenditures of the Association.

Section 6. The governing body of the Association shall be the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall consist of the elected officers of the Association and as many additional members of the Association as are interested in taking an active role in the Association. The size of the Executive Board may vary. The Executive Board is intended to be inclusive rather than exclusive in its membership. Members of the Executive Board shall attend meetings of the Board on a regular basis. Meetings of the Board shall be open to the membership and general public.

Section 7. The Executive Board shall have the power to initiate actions to further the purposes of the Association and to strengthen the Association and ensure its survival. Actions of the Executive Board shall be appropriate to the purposes of the Association and consistent with the Bylaws. If the Executive Board is unable to reach consensus, decisions of the Board will be made by majority vote of a quorum of the Board.

Section 8. The Executive Board shall not **Insert if applicable**.

Section 9. Subcommittees may be formed as needed by the Executive Committee with members appointed by the President to carry out such activities as may be necessary to accomplish the purpose of the Association.

#### **ARTICLE V. NOMINATION, ELECTION, AND REPLACEMENT OF OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS.**

Section 1. The officers of the Association shall be nominated and elected by a majority of those in attendance at the annual meeting held in **November** of the **election year**. Public notification must be provided at least one week prior to all election meetings. If there is more than one candidate for an office, voting shall be by secret ballot. Officers must be members of the Association. Officers shall be elected for **terms of two years**.

Section 2. The non-officer members of the Executive Board shall be appointed by the President of the Association. Appointment to the Executive Board may be requested by any member of the Association. Requests for appointment to the Executive Board may not be refused except by unanimous vote of the officers of the Association. Members of the Board shall serve from the time appointed until the next election of officers.

Section 3. Officers and members of the Executive Board may serve additional terms as elected or appointed.

Section 4. Officers or Executive Board members may be removed from duty by a simple majority vote of a quorum of a general membership meeting. Non-officer members of the Executive Board may also be removed by a simple majority vote of the Executive Board members.

Section 5. If an officer other than the President resigns or is removed from office, the President shall have the authority to appoint individuals to complete that officer's term of office. If the President resigns or is removed from office, the Vice-President shall assume the duties of the President.

## ARTICLE VI. MEETINGS.

Section 1. All general meetings of the Association meetings as well as Executive Board meetings shall be open to the membership and to the general public. Notice of all general meetings shall attempt to reach each resident member in the neighborhood.

Section 2. Participation in the discussion at meetings of the Executive Board or general meetings of the Association is restricted to members of the Association and to individuals who are invited by the Executive Board. This restriction may be waived by a simple majority vote of a quorum of the Executive Board.

Section 3. For meetings of the Executive Board, a quorum shall consist of a number of members equal to a simple majority of the Executive Board. For general meetings of the Association, **a quorum shall consist of no less than 16 members.**

Section 4. The Executive Board shall meet at least **three times a year.** A general meeting of the Association shall be held annually.

## ARTICLE VII. FINANCES.

Section 1. No dues are required for membership in the **Insert** Neighborhood Association.

Section 2. The Executive Board may suggest and solicit donations to cover costs of the Association and may require that a fee be paid by members who wish to receive mailings of the Association.

## ARTICLE VIII. AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of a quorum of any general membership meeting or by a unanimous vote of all members of the Executive Board. These Bylaws were adopted at a general meeting of the **Insert** Neighborhood Association on **Date.**

### For More Information

City of Corvallis  
Housing and Neighborhoods Services Division  
P.O. Box 1083  
501 SW Madison Avenue  
Corvallis, OR 97339  
(541) 766-6552  
[tracy.oulman@corvallisoregon.gov](mailto:tracy.oulman@corvallisoregon.gov)

📌 Contact the Housing and Neighborhood Services Division for an editable version of this document.

## Appendix B: Sample Neighborhood Agreement

Our neighborhood association, **INSERT NAME**, is committed to helping neighbors build relationships and work together to address common interests.

**Purpose.** Our purpose and goals are to:

1. Facilitate and encourage connection between neighbors.
2. Foster communication between our neighborhood, the City, and the broader community.
3. Create and promote opportunities for our neighbors to participate in local and community issues.

**Geographic Boundaries.** The geographic boundaries of our organization are **INSERT** to the west, **INSERT** to the north, **INSERT** to the east, and **INSERT** to the south (map attached). Before making changes to our geographic boundaries, we agree to reach out to affected neighborhood associations and community members to ensure consensus regarding any boundary adjustments.

**Inclusion.** All those who live or own property within the boundaries including renters, property owners, and business owners, are invited to participate as a member in our association.

**Meetings.** The **INSERT NAME** will hold at least one general meeting or event per year. We agree to attempt to reach out and provide advanced notice to those within our boundaries of any general meeting or event. Meeting notes will be taken and available upon request.

**Neighborhood Liaison.** Our association is committed to helping those within our boundaries to be *informed* of neighborhood and community issues and to encourage our neighbors to *represent themselves* on matters important to them.

We agree to provide contact information for two Neighborhood Liaisons to the City and to notify the City of any changes.

Our Neighborhood Liaisons agree to:

1. Provide the City with an e-mail address, mailing address, and phone number.
2. Act as a conduit for sharing information between our neighborhood and our neighbors, the City, and broader community.

and they agree *not* to:

- a. Present their opinions as being those of the neighborhood association itself.  
**[except under the following circumstances]**
- b. Promote partisan activities using their role as a Neighborhood Liaison.

We will invite our neighbors to serve as a neighborhood liaison for a **INSERT**-year term and agree to notify those within our boundaries of the opportunity before the meeting or event in which liaisons are elected.

If our organization raises funds through events, grants, or other means, we agree to appoint a Treasurer. The Treasurer will keep financial records of the organization, will have the authority of to sign checks for expenditures and will serve for a **INSERT**-year term.

**Voting.** Any member of our association may call for a vote. A vote must have a minimum of **INSERT** members present to represent a quorum. If a quorum is present, the following procedures will be followed:

1. Present factual, non-partisan information

2. Offer neighbors an opportunity to discuss the topic as a group
3. Conduct a secret ballot vote, unless an alternative is agreed to by the majority of attendees.
  - a. Each person living or owning within the boundary shall have one vote
  - b. Each business residing in the boundary shall have one vote.
4. Vote results will be calculated and announced prior to the conclusion of the meeting

**Finances.** No dues are required to participate in the **INSERT NAME**.

**Amendments.** This agreement can be amended by a majority vote of a quorum during a general meeting or event.

This agreement was adopted at a general meeting of the **INSERT NAME** on **DATE**.

**For More Information**

City of Corvallis  
Housing and Neighborhoods Services Division  
P.O. Box 1083  
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(541) 766-6552



Contact the Housing and Neighborhood Services Division for an editable version of this document.

## Appendix C: Position Description Examples

It is important for your neighborhood association to remain as inclusive as possible. Therefore, any person who is a resident or property owner within the neighborhood association boundaries, or who meets the criteria as set forth in your association's by-laws, is a prospective member and will be able to participate in your association.

Your association's bylaws should specify the positions and the general framework of your electoral process. The “job” descriptions outline the responsibilities of the board and other individual officer positions.

### Board of Directors

A Board of Directors structure is often used to promote leadership continuity and to broaden involvement across the neighborhood association's boundaries. The structure also provides opportunities to delegate. Board composition and roles are at the discretion of the neighborhood association. Roles often include officers and members at-large or street representatives.

- Supervises the affairs of the neighborhood association
- Coordinates meetings, including time, place, and outreach
- Performs duties outlined in the bylaws
- Reports decisions at general meetings

### President

- Oversees the schedule of meetings and activities
- Coordinates the activities of officers, leaders, and committees
- Appoints committees as needed. The chairperson is an ex-officio member of all committees except the nominating committee
- Represents the association in a public capacity
- Acts as a central point of contact for the community, city staff, and elected officials
- Arranges for a regular meeting time and place each month
- Reviews tasks and makes assignments
- Develops a meeting agenda
- Contacts each person who has a part during the meeting and encourages him/her to be prepared
- Arrives at least 30 minutes before the meeting to set up the room
- Exhibits good leadership qualities and is a role model to the members of the association.

### Vice President

- Assists the president
- Presides at meetings and performs other duties in the absence of the chairperson

- Arrives at least 30 minutes before the meeting to set up the room
- Responsible for introducing new members and guests at meetings

### Secretary

- Keeps complete and accurate minutes of all meetings.
- Reads letters of information or any other correspondence to the group. Writes letters for the association.
- Maintains current and comprehensive membership records.
- Contacts members who have missed several meetings and extends an invitation for them to attend the next meeting.

### Treasurer

- Keeps accurate records of all receipts and expenditures of association funds
- Plans a budget and presents to the association for approval
- Pays bills as approved by the association in a timely and accurate manner
- Gives a financial report at each meeting or as requested by the chairperson
- Prepares financial report for the year and presents it to the association
- Provides written and financial reports for the Secretary to include with the minutes
- Maintains custody of collected neighborhood funds
- Responsible for accounting the funds to the Board and general membership
- Provides accounting documents upon request

### Standing Committees

Neighborhood associations often appoint standing committee on topics of interest to the neighbors. Standing committees allow individuals to develop expertise in specific subject areas and help the neighborhood stay informed or involved with the City. Common standing committees include:

- Communications and Outreach Committee
- Emergency Preparedness Committee
- Public Safety Committee
- Parks Committee
- Welcome Committee

🔍 Ask other neighborhood association leaders for examples of their standing committee descriptions.

## Appendix D: Effective Meetings

A good agenda ensures the discussion is focused and flows well, the meeting achieves its aim, and that it is a productive use of attendees' time. It also helps invitees prepare to participate in the meeting, provides structure to the meeting, and gives a way in which success of the meeting can be assessed.

- **Start the meeting on time!** Don't penalize those who arrived on time by making them wait for late-comers.
- **Create a climate in which all opinions are valid and valued.** Many people are too quiet or shy to speak up even though they sometimes have a very good point to make or issue to bring up. Gently encourage those people to be involved or share their opinions or ideas.
- **Use polls.** A good way to get everyone involved is to poll all members present. This forces the silent members to provide their input.
- **Manage the meeting.** On the flip side, there are those members who dominate the meeting. When they overpower by being aggressive or violating other people's rights, they are most likely insecure or need attention. The best way to handle this is to demonstrate control and assertiveness. Do not ignore them or give them negative feedback which will only lead to further problems.

Instead, confront the problem. Make direct eye contact with them and turn your body toward them so they know you are listening. If they know you are paying attention to them they won't have to resort to negative approaches to get your attention. See Tips for Dealing with Difficult Personalities at Meetings.

- Try to make sure when everyone leaves the meeting they feel as if something has been accomplished. They should end with a plan of action. Be sure agenda items were specific enough that everyone knows what is going on and what was decided. At the end of the meeting give a brief overview of action items and assignments and answer people's questions.
- It is a best practice to send out meeting minutes to everyone who attended and provided an e-mail address.

### Dealing with Difficult Personalities at Meetings

Challenge	Solutions
Broken Record	Use group memory or the minute of the meeting to remind the participant that the point is noted.

	When a point is being discussed too long; summarize or suggest tabling the question for a later time.
Know-It All	Remind the group that all members have expertise; that's the reason for the meeting.
Attacker	Thank the attacker and ask the rest of the group what their opinion on the situation is.
Over-Talker	Interrupt the participant with a statement giving credit for his contribution, but politely ask him to hold his other points until later.  Ask if anyone would like to take up one of these points.
The Drifter	Drifters gos from subject to subject. Interrupt, give them credit for their idea, but explain it is important to follow the agenda. The topic may be discussed after the meeting or placed on the next agenda.

## Appendix E: Providing Public Testimony

Giving public testimony before the City Council, boards, or commissions can be frightening if you have never done it before. There are several things you can do to make your thoughts and presentation clear and successful. You may not always have the time to follow the outline listed below. However, whenever you can, it is beneficial to spend as much time as possible preparing your testimony. Carefully prepared testimony may influence action. Also, testimony becomes part of the public record and may be referred to later on.

### How to Prepare Public Testimony

- **Know your timeframe.** Find out when, where, and before whom (City Council, Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, etc.) the issue will appear. This will let you know how much time you have to prepare--there is a big difference between having one day and one month to prepare.
- **Know your issue.** Support opinions with as many facts as possible. Do your homework: information is power. Read newspapers, magazines, etc., to find out about the issue. Talk to local government officials, when possible, and other citizens. Be knowledgeable of the opposition's arguments and be prepared to counter those arguments. Also, draw on your own knowledge and experience.
- **Start writing down main points.** Construct a rough outline from scattered thoughts, research, plus any additional brainstorming. Begin thinking about any extra visual aids that might be important (posters, charts, fact sheets, flyers, cartoons, brochures, etc.).
- **Know how much time is allowed for the testimony.** At City Council meetings, the time limit for testimony is usually indicated on the agenda or announced by the Mayor. However, effective testimony should generally be held to under five minutes. If your ideas are well-organized, five minutes should be ample time to make your point effectively.
- **Write a draft statement.** Address the governmental body (example: "Mr./Ms. Mayor, Members of the Council"). State your name and address for the record. Say if you are testifying for yourself or a group, and give a brief description of why you or your group is testifying on the issue. Explain how support for your testimony was solicited from your group (by petitions, vote at meeting, surveys, letters, etc.). Whenever possible, bring with you documentation of that support (copies of petitions, surveys, minutes of meetings, etc.). Be specific about how many people were involved in making the decision. State whether this is a majority or minority opinion.
- **Keep the statement as short as possible (two pages is about right).** State the problem, the reasons why you or your group support or oppose, and then summarize. Get others to read and make comments on the draft. If you need the approval of a group, use the rough draft so people will feel comfortable making corrections or suggestions on the copy. Let the statement sit for a day or so, if you have the time, and then go back and read it again and revise if necessary.
- **Write up final copy.** Type and double space the final copy, if possible (easier to read,

looks neater, etc.). Be careful to check spelling.

- **Start anticipating questions** from the Council, board, etc. Practice giving testimony before friends and get hints on improving the presentation.

### Testifying as a Group

- Make sure different people cover different topics so the testimony is not repetitious.
- Learn the decision-making process.
- Contact and meet with city staff if you have questions about the materials or process.
- Notify your elected officials about your interests or concerns.
- Concentrate and coordinate your efforts.
- Inform yourself; research the issue.
- Inform the members and the public of the issues.
- Attend meetings.
- Always provide completely accurate information to elected officials; never deliberately provide misleading or false information.
- Focus on the preliminary stages of policy-making.
- Form coalitions.
- Identify "swing votes."
- Be discreet.
- Be realistic. You may not win every fight, and at times, compromises will have to be made.
- Thank elected officials and city staff for their help.
- Involve as many members as possible in different roles.
- Reach out to other neighborhood associations if they have a common interest. Learn their perspective.
- Inform your members about which officials helped and supported your cause.
- Evaluate your efforts.
- Monitor the implementation of decisions.

## Appendix F: Setting Goals

A unifying vision or purpose for your neighborhood provides direction for setting goals that will make the vision a reality. Determine the needs of the neighborhood through meetings and personal discussions with neighbors during a neighborhood walk. After you construct a list of possible needs, discuss them in reasonable depth to identify the issues. When issues are clearly identified, discuss each one and agree on the priority of each issue. Sort the issues into short-term or long-term projects and begin to evaluate how your association would like to approach each issue.

In developing neighborhood projects, focus on a specific issue that will demonstrate action and results and that will be visible in the neighborhood. Get the whole community behind the project by promoting the issue as much as possible. This will provide lots of participation for you to establish a large membership base. If you are successful in achieving your goals or effecting change on a single issue, it demonstrates that your association is an effective group. This establishes the credibility and worthiness of your association, characteristics which are important to long-term survival. Unfortunately, one problem with concentrating on a single issue is that when that problem is solved, everyone leaves.

Therefore, it is important to introduce other issues at the same time and get people to work on them in addition to the main issue. As each issue is resolved, focus on new, short- and long-term projects. Most importantly, do not forget to celebrate!

The following is a list of possible short- and long-term projects to consider: Neighborhood or Park Clean-up

- Community Garden, tree planting, flower planting
- Back-to-school party and school supply drive
- Neighborhood scrapbook or video
- Neighborhood Watch program
- Annual Block party or festival
- Neighborhood entrance signs
- Security lighting
- Tool lending libraries
- Neighborhood cook-out, picnic, or potluck
- National Night Out celebration
- Neighborhood t-shirts
- Yard of the month award
- Neighborhood newsletter, web site, directory, or telephone/e-mail tree
- Painted intersection
- Speakers on topics of interest to the neighborhood
- Adopt-a-Park Program
- Philanthropic projects, such as "adopting" a family who needs help with Christmas dinner

Evaluate the association's progress to recognize successes, detect problems, and suggest improvements. In planning projects, keep momentum with a list of projects and activities that will maintain participation and interest. The best approach is to plan

around a calendar. Do not suffocate members with more projects than time will allow. Choose a pace and stay consistent. Slow progress is often better than no progress at all, but keep in mind that one large gap in activity could cost you the participation of a large majority of your membership because of lack of interest. Be careful how you plan and coordinate all projects. Keep people involved in all levels and give people specific jobs (with specific time frames) to do. Everyone is willing to contribute a little bit of time. Do not give too much responsibility to one person when it can be easily delegated to several.

Finally, celebrate your accomplishments!

## Appendix G: Local Government

### Council-Manager Form of Government

The City of Corvallis operates using a Council-Manager form of government. Under this form, an elected governing body, referred to as the Council, is responsible for legislative functions, such as establishing policy, passing local ordinances, voting appropriations, and developing an overall vision for the community. The City Manager is appointed by the City Council to oversee the administrative operations, implement its policies, and advise the Council. The City Charter, our city's constitution, contains the most up-to-date laws governing how our city functions.

- ✦ [Corvallis City Charter](#) (online)

### Mayor and City Wards

The City Council is comprised of nine Councilors and a Mayor. Councilors are elected by their ward and serve two-year terms. The Mayor is elected by the Corvallis community and serves a four-year term. The City Council is responsible for making decisions that best serve the needs of the entire Corvallis community.

Neighborhood associations work closely with their ward representative but are also encouraged to communicate and engage with the whole Council. Use the links below to access helpful information regarding the City Council.

- ✦ [Council Meeting Overview](#)
- ✦ [Corvallis Ward Map](#)
- ✦ [Meet Your Councilors](#)
- ✦ [Council Meeting Materials](#)
- ✦ [Public Input Form](#)

### City Manager & City Staff

The City Manager provides operational oversight to nine city departments and serves at the will of the City Council. The organizational chart below provides an overview of the city government structure.

- [City Manager's Office](#)
- [Community Development](#) (\*includes the Housing and Neighborhood Services Division)
- [Finance](#)
- [Fire](#)
- [Human Resources](#)
- [Information Technology](#) (\*includes GIS and map services)
- [Library](#)
- [Parks and Recreation](#)
- [Police](#)
- [Public Works](#)

The City publishes a comprehensive [phone and e-mail directory online](#).

